The white dress

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/53397118.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Will Graham's Dogs
Additional Tags:	Dresses, cross dressing, nonsexual cross dressing, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter, Intense, Fluff and Angst, Fluff, Tooth Rotting Fluff, Will Graham Needs a Hug, Hannibal wants to give that hug, Internalized Homophobia, Internal Conflict, Internalized Misogyny, Insecure Will Graham, Insecurity, Breaking and Entering, Forty-Something Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal finds something unexpected, Thirty-Something Will Graham, Self Confidence Issues, Hannibal has no sense of personal space, Hannibal has no sense of bonderies, Stealing, Light Angst, Slight Cannon divergence, i semi don't know to tag, Panicked Will graham, Panic, Will graham is overthinking, Overthinking, Unethical Medicine, Unethical therapy, Will Graham is a Mess, will graham is autistic, author is autistic, 1800s symbolism, Ball dancing, Daydreaming
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2024-01-30 Words: 4,763 Chapters: 1/1

The white dress

by EclipsesDream

Summary

Hannibal breaks into Will grahams house and finds something he never thought he'd see with the profiler.

i want to thank my friend Hannah for helping me with the dialogue! the roleplay really helped for this fic.

It had been in the back of his closet for a year now, a white dress with spaghetti straps. It was his size, maybe a bit bigger.. It was beautiful, and Will felt his stomach twist.

He'd only worn it once since he got it, and that was the best day of his fucking life. He had sat down at home, a soft lace coat around his arms accompanying the dress.

He watched videos of women dancing in ballrooms, paying extra attention to dresses that looked like his, thoughts of him and someone just dressing the night away.

He'd even dance in the dress to classical music, his bare feet hitting the floor, a flood of dogs surrounding him as he sang along, joy lighting up his soft features.

It was never anything sexual, and for the longest time, Will had never had the need or want for the mystery person to be filled by an actual person; they were just there for the fantasy.

Will didn't have much longer to look at the garment; he grabbed his coat from the closet and put it on, walking to his car to work.

Hannibal wasn't sure what he was expecting when he broke into Will Graham's home, but he knew he was looking for something, whether it be a trophy to keep off his patient, to imagine what couldn't be true, or to find some dirty secret.

The ladder was the answer that Hannibal hadn't expected.

It went normal at first; Hannibal picked the lock, which, given how shitty it was, barely took a turn of the key; some basic tension and a click and he was in. his next challenge was Will's dogs; they yipped and jumped, barking happily to see the ever semi-familiar presence of the Psychiatrist.

Hannibal held his hand still, and he teased the dogs for a moment before giving them their own treats; once they had gotten their tax, they ran off, going to find something more interesting.

All except the small Dawson; she was a baby, just barely a month old, and her name was Bean. Hannibal remembered when Will brought her in. Hannibal wasn't pleased about a stray puppy in his office, but he couldn't say no to the shaking thing or Will's puppy dog eyes.

Since then, Will had brought her in until she no longer needed the intensive care, and all the while, she'd fuss when she was in Hannibal's arms, and when she learned to move around and bark, she'd do anything to fuss at Hannibal.

Hannibal knew she'd be a problem; she'd sensed something in Hannibal, knew before Will knew, but fortunately, it was a dog that caught on and not a human. Hannibal hoped WIll would chalk it up to a weird scent Hannibal might've had instead of investigating it further.

Hannibal looked around the living room, and he noted the bed in it. It sat opposite of the couch. It was messy, left tangled and tattered instead of cleanly being fitted like Hannibal kept his. On the fireplace sat a heater; in front of it was a pallet of dog beds and blankets and flannels, presumably where the dogs slept at night.

Hannibal walked up to the table where lures were set up. He sat down, and with gentle hands, he finished the lure for Will; he knew it unwise to leave tracks, but this wasn't anything significant, and Will would most likely chalk it up to being forgetful.

Hannibal sighed softly. He stood and walked to the kitchen, which was about what he expected. It was.. Barren, to say the least, dishes were piled in the sink, a shitty overused sponge sitting between the wall and Faucet; Hannibal grimaced, worried for the mold that may currently be growing there.

Hannibal moved on to the fridge, and it was like a wasteland, nothing but a bag of dino nuggets, some leftover Chinese, a carton of milk, and a bottle of water. Hannibal sighed, noting he needed to bring Will over for breakfast and dinner more often.

Hannibal finally, after a while, opened up the closet. At first, he didn't see anything out of the order, mainly coats and fishing gear. He shuffled through and was met with a lovely dress, a soft lace coat over the soldiers, hiding the coathanger holding it all together.

It confused Hannibal at first, as this was something he hadn't expected from Will, but as it processed, he couldn't help but feel saddened that Will hadn't been open about this. But what could Hannibal expect from someone as Secretive as Will Graham?

Then he heard it, the dreaded noise of a car pulling up in the driveway. Hannibal had to make a split-second decision: wait for Will to tell Hannibal months in advance, possibly have to be tortured by the thoughts of Will Graham in such a beautiful Garment, or force it from him in some way. Hannibal took one last long as the dress and took it from the closet, shutting the door and leaving it out of the back door.

Will didn't notice anything missing at first. He thought it odd that his lure was finished, but as Hannibal had predicted, he chalked it up to him being forgetful.

Then Will opened his closet to put away his coat. He grabbed a hanger and put it on it, hanging it up, but the shuffle of the darker coats and fishing gear didn't reveal the tiny bit of white it usually did.

Will tried to think nothing of it, and he was halfway through closing the closet door when he failed to talk himself out of his paranoia. He opened the door and shuffled through the closet, his dress nowhere to be seen.

Will's stomach dropped to the floor, and his heart stuck in his throat. He knew something was wrong. He tried to reason with himself as he searched the house that maybe he'd placed it, that when he was staring at it this morning, it was all a dream that he had, but as he searched more deeply into the home, the sickening realization began to form.

Pieces came together like magnets attract. His front door was unlocked, and although his dogs didn't seem to be acting weird, they hadn't touched their food like usual. His lure was finished, and now his dress was gone, but nothing else was taken when he had money in the drawers and other things of value, although few and far between.

It didn’t stop him from panicking more and more.. And it only built as the days went by. Will had no one to talk to either, and he couldn’t tell Alana or Jack about this, never mind Hannibal, whom he suspected, but that was more so a passing thought.

Now here he sat in the waiting room of Hannibal’s office, his leg bouncing, his mind racing, trying to think of ways to lie when he tells Hannibal about the break-in if he told him at all, but he’d know if something were wrong, he’d see if he was panicking even if he hit it remotely well.

Hannibal’s door opened, but no one else walked out. It seemed he either didn’t have a patient or the patient had taken the private exit. “Welcome, Will, come inside, we have much to discuss.” Hannibal stepped aside, his back pressed against the door, a soft, stoic expression on his face.

Will slowly stood up, his fingers going from fidgeting with the leather of the seat arms to his sweater collar, pinching and rolling the buttons there, unsnapping and snapping them, listening to the slight clicking sounds that came with the action.

Hannibal watched as Will walked in, watched as Will didn’t make any move to sit down. Hannibal shut the door, walking towards his desk for his notebook. “Please, sit.”

Will shook his head, pacing the room's perimeter, his hands running over the cabinets and shelves, trying to focus on anything but what was presently happening.

Hannibal was watching Will, and he knew it. He knew it well, and those maroon eyes held an air of intense curiosity and caution. “Is something plaguing the depths of your mind, Will?” Hannibal picked up his notebook and pen, opened it to the latest page, waiting for WIll to talk so he could take notes.

“Nope, no, just something happened yesterday. It’s messing with me.” Will finally sat down; his need to fidget with the leather of the seat’s arms was enough to comfort him.

Hannibal glances down at his notebook before setting it on the desk and meeting Will’s eyes again. “You seem rather agitated, more so than usual.” Hannibal wanted to dig into Will, get

that answer he so desperately wanted, *that dirty little secret*…

Will closed his eyes, and he sighed shakily, gripping the arms of the chair and mentally getting his story straight. “Someone.. Someone broke in last night.”

Hannibal kept his expression stoic, but inside, he felt a surge of curiosity and pride. *Did Will know?* Perhaps Hannibal will find out soon enough. “They broke into your home?”

“Yes, they did’ n't steal much but a few watches, a coat or two,” Will repeated robotically and knew it but couldn’t stop. Will pulled his knees up to his chest and usually these things wouldn’t upset Will, but something else was wrong.

Hannibal's brow twitches down ever so slightly. He knows Will well enough to know that physical objects have no actual meaning to him; he’s not materialistic. “And how did you respond to this traumatic invasion of your privacy?”

“Checked on my dogs, put in new locks in the house, and cried the rest of the day.” Will was honest. He didn’t have any problems telling the truth since he’d been lying the rest of the time and would continue to if it meant his secret wouldn’t get out.

Hannibal let out a slow breath to calm the growing tension that had begun to rise in him. A sense of possessiveness and protectiveness had crept in. “May I ask why tears fell?”

“They.. They took something.” Will felt a lump form in his throat, shame filling his gut. He hugged his knees tighter, trying not to think of the dress.

Hannibal hid a smirk that threatened to cross his face. “Must have been something very important to illicit such a strong response.”

Will could sense the shift in tone; he wanted to be angry, but he knew better than to react like that. He was looking for something to point the blame to, that’s all.

Hannibal waited patiently for Will to comment as he crossed his ankle over his knee and leaned forward slightly, becoming more interested.

“What.. What has you so smug?” Will asked, looking at him and not trying to seem angry.

Hannibal leans back, his expression becoming more blank as time passed and he dug further. “Who says I’m so self-satisfied? I apologize if I gave you such an impression.”

Will felt it hit again, and he’d misread the situation. He was so about that dress that secret now it had gone into someone else's hands. *Their dirty fucking hands*..

Hannibal let out a slow breath, and his mind had gone from prideful to guilty as he watched Will spiral into his thoughts. “Stay with me, Will, I assure you, I am sure whatever is that ails you will be of no significant consequence. You need not tell me, but I will not lie. I believe it may be beneficial to you.”

Hannibal paused momentarily, thinking he might attempt to strengthen what little trust existed. “I’d hope you know well enough that whatever is said in this room is confidential.”

“You wouldn’t I-” Will shut his eyes, putting his face in his hands. “I don’t know what to say.. You’d think me a freak.” Will knew it was terrible to say such things around Hannibal as he’d been corrected before by him, but he didn’t know what else to say.

Hannibal’s expression shifted slightly. At first, it was a stern face, his urge to correct Will rising for the moment before it settled into a minuscule smirk. “Do not presume to know my thoughts of you, Will. You may find yourself utterly astounded by the truth hidden by my mind.”

“That can change very easily, Hannibal,” Will shot back. “Especially with the shit I keep locked up.” Will rubbed his face, trying not to think about how anxious he was.

“Do you truly believe I could easily switch my beliefs? So, without *careful consideration?* ” Hannibal's hands run over his knees, a bit shocked by Will's lower expectations, although he knew it was simply projections of himself and his past experiences of similar situations. “I’m afraid my opinion of you is set in stone.”

“A dress,” Will said bitterly, clearly forced, not something he wanted to say, but he had no choice now. Hannibal's claws were only getting stronger and digging more profound than at the start of this session. “They took it. Just call me a sissy and tell me to leave already.” It was clear and confirmed before that Will had been afraid of others’ opinions and judgments.

Hannibal let his expression soften slightly. Internally pleased that Will had finally outed himself. “Why would I ever do that?”

“Others would, but I guess you aren’t others.” Will leaned back against the seat, not comfortably, more to get away from Hannibal.

“My dear Will, you should know by now that no one is quite like me, or you for that matter.” the image of Will in that sweet little white dress filled his mind as he looked upon him.

Will looked down. “It’s so frustrating, and I can’t report it because Jack and Alana will find out.” Will stood again, unable to stay still. He paced, he couldn’t stop thinking, couldn’t relax.

Hannibal watched Will pace for a few minutes, deciding he should also stand. He walked towards Will cautiously, like a predator stalking its prey. “I imagine it’s quite frustrating. Have you considered buying another? Or is there a specific attachment to this singular dress?”

The question had stopped Will’s mind buzzing, and it was a question he’d asked himself for a long time when he stared at the dress collecting dust in the closet. *Is there an emotional attachment to the dress? Yes.*

“Yes, I want to say I have an emotional attachment to the dress, but I’ve been staring at it in my closet for the past year. I only wore it when I first got it.” Will replied, removing his glasses to rub the bridge of his nose, trying to rid his face of the painful tension.

Will admitting that he had worn the dress previously only strengthened Hannibal's imagination. Hannibal envisioned himself drawing Will in it, memorizing the way it would drape over his body, his curves, doing what the sweaters and button-ups and baggy jeans that were worn down couldn't do. "What made you unable to wear it more often?" Hannibal finally asked after a taut few moments of silence. He spoke slowly, like Will was a rapid feral animal.

"Shame mainly, then Jack started coming over unannounced, and work happened, and no matter how much I wanted to wear it, I felt so scared someone would find out, whether it be Freddie Lounds and her veiled crime-themed gossip machine of a website, or Jack and Alanas unannounced visits and the stresses of work. I know Consciously that none of that will matter when I put it on, but convincing myself got harder and harder." Will took a deep breath. And he'd been talking so fast and without taking a breath besides the occasional gasp when he didn't have air to speak anymore.

Hannibal's eyes found Wills in an instant. Hannibal did not like the thought of Will being ashamed of something that, in his mind, was so compelling and sweet, which Will desperately wanted to enjoy and keep enjoying.

Hannibal placed his hand on Wills's shoulder gently, kindly, one of the many emotions Hannibal showed, if any. "Why would you feel ashamed?" Hannibal's voice had an edge of disbelief to it. Hannibal fought the urge to smack some sense into Will by revealing all the thoughts in his head, but he had to be patient. The longer their game went on, the more Will would reveal.

"I grew up in Louisiana, from Green Bay to Baton Rouge. None of the city's guys would be caught dead in a dress. More than likely, that'd be the reason they were killed." Will explained it was partly why he never socialized, and the state was strict on behavior, and anything that checked a box that wasn't considered normal would be outcasted.

Hannibal looked deeper into Will's eyes, searching. "It's a shame that social constructs have formed your fears so strongly… But that is all they are: social concepts. Made by a man for men. In a desperate attempt at feeling superior, like a bigger alpha." Hannibal's words became softer, and he couldn't help himself as he moved to Will's neck and ran his thumb over Will's cheeks. "Will.. you need not be afraid, no ashamed of something that is a part of you."

Will leaned into the touch, and he shut his eyes, trying to take Hannibal's words to heart. "I wish I could wear it again.." Will whispered. "Wear like I did when I got it, barefoot, music playing, pretending I'm somewhere else, in a field with my dogs… At peace like in those old movies."

Hannibal's heart rate skyrocketed for the first time since he'd been in a rush in the ER as a wide-eyed resident. Will accepted his touch and embraced it, and that made Hannibal ecstatic. "I would have liked to see that and indulge in that fantasy if you would allow me."

The words spill out of Hannibal without his permission. It was like a whisper, pulled out as quickly as a breath. Instead of backing off, he decided to buckle down. Hannibal leans slightly closer as his thumb once again caresses Will's cheek.

Will gives in. The feeling of touch was excellent, incredibly as strong as a connection between him and Hannibal. "Hannibal, did you, did you know about this?" Will was hesitant to say this, and he didn't want to shatter the moment. It took everything in him not to back out or apologize, which failed immediately. "I'm sorry that was rude. I should've said that, especially when you've done so much for me."

Hannibal continued to stroke Will's cheek, not wanting the moment to end. "It's okay, Will." Hannibal considered the possible consequences of telling Will the truth that he had taken the dress himself. That he couldn't have helped himself even if he had tried. Hannibal leaned his head forward to rest against Wills as he pulled him into a hug. "It would be nothing short of a lie if I said I did not."

Will knew it. He wanted to be angry about it, but that anger strangely took relief. He wasn't sure if it was because he expected it, or he was happy that it was Hannibal's and not someone else hands, or worse, Freddie Lounds', or maybe even it was the touch or all three, but honestly? Will couldn't care. "Okay," it was soft, only an answer to show he wasn't mad at Hannibal if pulling away wasn't enough of a conviction. "Do.. you have it? "

Hannibal smiled as he placed his other hand on Will's neck, now holding his face. "My dear Will… do you think I could walk away from something with such value?" Hannibal looked deeply into Will's gray eyes with a fond expression. "Yes, I have it in my possession. I will return it if you wish. I do have a condition, however."

He was right, and Will knew he was right; Hannibal was just like a raven; if he found something shiny, he would take it. “You’re like a crow, Doctor Lecter,” Will said jokingly as he placed his hand on Hannibal’s neck, mimicking Hannibal’s hand on his own, a soft smile spreading across his lips.

Hannibal took in a sharp breath as Will reciprocated his small advances. “I want to see you in it. I want you to wear it for me. That is my condition.”

Will’s breath caught in his throat. He knew that was coming, but it didn't stop his shock. “You.. want me to wear it for *you?* ” Will wanted to, and he felt his heart leap at the opportunity. A soft feeling of joy warmed his stomach. The mere thought of someone he’d known so long wanting to see him, wanting to see the peace Will felt when he wore that dress.

Hannibal smiles a little wider. “Yes, dear Will.” Hannibal let out a heavy breath as the feeling of fondness nearly overcame him ultimately. He moved a hand to smooth Will’s curls. “How could I resist wanting to see you in such a beautiful dress?”

“You couldn’t,” Will answered. He pulled away looking around. “Where did you put it?” He asked. Will wasn’t sure if he was shaking from anticipation, anxiety or joy, but he kept looking for it.

Hannibal chuckled softly as Will looked around the office. Seeing Will so eager had made him excited to give it back to him. “It isn’t here, but by all means feel free to look about my office. Though, i’d never hide something so precious where people would commonly go.”

Will felt a little frustrated when he realized that it wasn’t there, although Hannibal had a point. Will took the opportunity, he looked around the office, though familiar he never seemed to have actually looked at the details. Some textures were nice and seemed to calm Will, others made Will’s hand jerk back and a soft hiss left him. It was quite interesting to watch.

Hannibal watched intently, taking note of Wills likes and dislikes. Velvet was definitely out which cause Hannibal to chuckle softly.

Will took in the details of the books, most of them were of human anatomy or psychology, nothing too surprising. Will looked at the ladder, thought about when Hannibal cornered him on it, he shook his head and mentally logged it. It was irrotational to count the rungs of it but it calmed him, made him feel safe even if he'd forget it later.

Hannibal watched the way Will processes things, it fascinated him as it always had since he met the prolifer. He walked over to Will once more. "The dress is currently in my home. Would you like to go? Perhaps i could cook you dinner as well?" Hannibal talked softly as to not startle Will.

Will turned, he had a soft smile, he nodded. Hannibal hadn't seen this in a long time, the soft joy on Wills face. Softness in his eyes, and the willingness to open up.

Hannibal smiled back at Will, feeling a sense of pride to be the one to place that look on his face. He then extended his arm. "Let us go then."

The drive was quiet, Will was looking out the window at the surroundings that flew by. Will tried to follow the trees passing but he couldn't and he laughed at the trippy effect it caused.

Hannibal glanced over at Will a few times, just taking in the moment. These moments were always his favorite. The moments between storms that made up their relationship until now. Hannibal pulled into the driveway of his home, electing to park outside, if only to enjoy the short walk to the door. He opened Will's door for him then offered his hand to help him out.

Will took his hand, he stayed right beside Hannibal as they walked to the door and than into the home, the nature scent of the house easing him just like if it were filled with the scent of Hannibal's latest dinner.

Hannibal watched Will for a long moment as his heart pounded in his chest. Will of course had been in Hannibal's mind, this time was much different. "Come with me. I wish to show you something." Hannibal began walking to the living room, he'd polished the hard wood floor, a radio was placed on the coffee table and the living room had been Decorated like a old 1800s ball, paintings of famous ball dancing, flowers in vases surrounding the edges of the room.

Will looked stunned when he saw how this was set up, he felt at peace already, so happy that Hannibal would do this for him.

Hannibal gestures to the small closet, he opened it revealing the dress, carefully wrapped and kept safe from the outside.

Will smiled seeing it, it was as if everything melted away. He gently took it from its hanger and hugged it close. “Thank you..” it was soft almost tearful with relief. Suddenly everything just clicked into place.

Hannibal’s smile did nothing but widened. He took a few steps to close the distance and looked into Wills eyes. He felt almost giddy at that moment, a feeling that he only got with Will graham. Hannibal places his hand on the small of Wills back. “Anything for you my dear Will.” It passed Hannibal's mind that he fully meant to those words, and the danger that came with them. Though in this moment he cared not what could happen. He only cared about this moment.

“Wheres the bathroom?” Will asked. He was giddy as well, excited instead of hesitant and scared. Will wanted this for the first time in a long time, he truly wanted it, not just staring at Hannibal and the dress, and not taking the opportunity that would arise, he wanted to dive in head first.

“In the hall, second door to your left.” Hannibal’s eyes shone with excitement at Will’s new enthusiasm. He had never seen Will quite like this. So eager. So open. It pleased him greatly, and the fact that he had awoken this in him had only solidified his already strong obsession.

Will practically ran for the door. It wasn’t long before he was returned, his clothes in his arms, his lace covered arms. The dress thanks to the lack of shoes just barely touching the floor.

Hannibal froze when he saw WIll. His eyes widened. It was as if every one of his senses heightened in an instant. He had imaged Will in that dress so many times but it paled in comparison to the actual sight before him. Hannibal closed the small distance and walked around Will wanting to see every angle, every curve, every bit of this sight. Memorize it.

“You truly make the most sought after art, look like child's play.” Hannibal fought every urge to touch Will just yet, but it was clearly a losing battle as he gently let his fingertips brush across Will’s waist, feeling the fabric and the warmth of his body underneath, then he sild his hand over the lace on Wills arm. “I’m at a loss for words, i’m afraid.”

Will shivered when Hannibal's fingers brushed his waist, something he’d imagined for so long, that soft hold, both hands doing so many things. Holding him guiding him as they danced around the room, or holding his waist as he cooked with Hannibal or did dishes or where reading, shopping *anything.*

Will wanted to cry out in relief, the dark shadow that was a fill in, in his fantasy was now replaced with Hannibal, *something he wanted for so long..*

Will followed Hannibal’s face until he could no longer turn his head, repeating the process for the other side. “You rather the reality instead of an image, i can only imagine how starved you were this week.” Wills words were light hearted, more teasing than the usual snarky comment he would’ve made in any other situation.

Hannibal smiled. “Yes. i have been.” Hannibal stopped in front of Will. “May i have this dance?” Hannibal asked and Will gladly took his hand. Will and Hannibal both held each others shoulder and waist.

They danced and danced and danced.. The world melted away as they both filled the music in for themselves forever eternally there. In this living room, spinning and spinning and letting go. Will pulled Hannibal close, he kissed him, Hannibal although stunned kissed back.. The world was no longer there, it was just a room floating in space.. *forever.*

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!